

in the Italian Collection, of which about 4500 are skins and 1900 are set up, besides some 800 that are exotic. The series of colour-variations—albinisms and other kinds—is very rich. The skins are excellently made, carefully arranged, and fully labelled. Herr Vallon gives a long list of the more remarkable specimens, amongst which, we notice, are nine examples of *Buteo desertorum* and three of *B. ferox*, one of *Falco islandicus* from Venetia, also specimens of *Dendrocopus lilfordi*, *Turdus fuscatus*, *Budytes citreolus*, *Emberiza aureola*, *E. rustica*, and *E. pusilla*, with many other Italian rarities. The Count has, moreover, a considerable series of hybrids.

39. *Winge on the Birds of the Danish Lighthouses*, 1900.

[Fuglene ved de danske Fyr i 1900. 18de Aarsberetning om danske Fugle. Ved Herluf Winge. Vidensk. Medd. fra d. naturh. Foren. i Kbhvn. 1901, pp. 67-128.]

From the eighteenth report on the birds taken and observed at the Danish Lighthouses (see *Ibis*, 1901, p. 150) we learn that 700 specimens were received in the year 1900 at the Zoological Museum, Copenhagen, from 33 lighthouses. They are referred to 53 species. An example of the slender-billed form of the Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes leptorhynchus*) was taken at the Hestehoved Station on Oct. 30th.

The total number of species as yet registered in these lists is 144.

X.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters since our last issue :—

SIRS,—Amongst the many interesting spring displays of the *Anatidæ*, that of the male Baer's Duck, which I have studied in the specimens living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London, is somewhat remarkable. He commences to "draw" about the same time as the Scaup Duck, to which the species is evidently closely allied, and as regards his nuptial courtship is similar in many respects to that bird.

To attract the female, the Baer's Duck (*Fuligula baeri*) half raises himself in the water by a sudden movement, while at the same time the chest is thrust forward and the head and neck are depressed to the scapulars. Whilst this quick movement is being performed, the wind-pipe is blown out to the fullest extent, and then the air is released, forming at once a singular distension of the neck. This somewhat curious display is manifested amongst the *Anatidæ* by the Pochard and the Scaup only, but even these birds have somewhat dissimilar methods of courtship. Throat- and crop-distensions are, however, common amongst the Gallinaceous birds at the period of love-making. When much excited, Baer's Duck also contracts the black pupil of the eye till it is almost lost to the view of the spectator.

Yours &c.,

June 9th, 1901.

J. G. MILLAIS.

SIRS,—I have lately received, through my native collector, two specimens of the handsome Night-Heron discovered by the late Mr. Whitehead in Hainan, *Nycticorax magnifica* (Grant, Ibis, 1899, p. 585; P. Z. S. 1900, p. 493, pl. xxxiii.). They were shot near Chinteh, in Anhwei Province, on the south bank of the Yangtse, a distance of about 900 miles N. by E. of the locality where the type was procured. It is probable, therefore, that this species is distributed, in summer at least, throughout the hill-districts of Fokien, Chekiang, and Anhwei, which provinces are very similar in general character and natural productions. Fokien has been thoroughly worked by Messrs. Rickett and La Touche, and my collector has made frequent trips in Chekiang and Anhwei, the neighbourhood of Chinteh being favourite ground with him. It is therefore extraordinary that so conspicuous a bird should have remained so long undiscovered. The two specimens obtained were shot on different evenings when coming to roost in high trees; by day they could not be seen. Two others were seen, but not secured.

Yours &c.,

Shanghai,
26th August, 1901.

F. W. STYAN.

SIRS,—Two Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*), male and female, were shot on a large pond about three miles north of this village on the 19th of September, 1899. They had not quite assumed the winter dress, and in the male the sides of the head were still tinged with a dark rufous colour. They had not been seen on the pond previously and were clearly on migration; but, for several reasons, I think that they had passed the summer in this country and were not merely migrants which had recently arrived from abroad. The date is full early for foreign birds to have reached the middle of England. It is unlikely that two immigrant individuals (presumably a pair) should have wandered in company so far inland as Oxfordshire, where this Grebe is very rare as a visitor—far rarer than the Slavonian Grebe. The only connexion between the pond they were killed upon and the Thames is a small brook, a branch of one of the tributary streams which flow into the Cherwell many miles above Oxford. Even the Slavonian Grebe, which reaches Oxfordshire by way of the Thames, and is not very uncommon on that river above Oxford, is hardly known on these remote subtributary streams in the north of the county. I think also that this pair of Grebes were *not* non-breeding birds, hatched in 1898 and just over their autumnal moult, because in that case neither of them would have had any sign of rufous colour on the head, this colour not being exhibited by the young bird in the first summer following the year in which it was hatched (I conclude this is so from the examination of a bird shot in Anglesea on the 1st of August), and not being assumed at the autumn moult.

The organs of reproduction in the Oxfordshire birds were small, but this is usually the case with birds in early autumn. The only sign of (possible) immaturity shown by these examples was the colour of the irides—golden yellow; but the colour of the irides of Grebes is notoriously very variable, and may possibly change with the seasons.

It seems, therefore, reasonable to suppose that this pair of Eared Grebes had bred, or had attempted to breed, on one of the large reservoirs of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire,

or Northamptonshire, three of which are within eight miles of the pond on which these birds were shot. On all these reservoirs the Great Crested Grebe has bred for many years.

I venture to think that this evidence in support of a probable case of the Eared Grebe breeding in this country is of sufficient importance to be mentioned in 'The Ibis,' since the British Islands lie within the geographical breeding-range of the species, which is recorded to have been found in summer as far north as Jutland and to nest commonly in Southern Spain; while to the east as well as to the south of us it is common.

These two specimens are in my possession, and were seen by me three days after they were shot.

Yours &c.,

Bloxham, Oxon,
15th November, 1901.

O. V. APLIN.

SIRS,—August 9th, 1901, found H.M.S. 'Diana,' in company with other vessels of the Mediterranean fleet, at anchor at one of the islands of the Levant. Having previously arranged with Capt. Ferris, of the 'Empress of India,' to lend me his picket-boat, I reminded him of it by making the pre-arranged signal, and he came to fetch Commander Halsey, Dr. Stenhouse, and myself. Armed with ropes, canvas sling, egg-blowers, guns, and plenty of No. 6's, we started at 1.10 P.M. and ran to a small island at the entrance of the harbour some miles off: here, as we passed in the ship the day before, we had made out several Falcons skimming about. Luckily the wind was light and off shore, and there was but little swell; so we had no trouble in landing in the galley and skiff, which we had brought in tow.

We had no difficulty in making out that our Falcons were *Falco eleonoræ*, and we were soon at the top of the island endeavouring to find their breeding-places, as August is the time, strangely enough, that this bird lays—no doubt with the intention of feeding its young on the members of the autumn migration.

The island slopes steeply to the water at the northern end, but on the other faces is cliffy, particularly at the south. It is composed of rough sandstone, bits of which treacherously break off in the hand; but on the whole, if you wear india-rubber-soled shoes, the climbing is good. Vegetation is scarce, a few rock-plants and wild asparagus being all that I saw. The southern end of the island is split from the main portion by a deep crevice; but we managed to scramble up the face of it, and shortly afterwards I heard a shout from Stenhouse announcing that he had found eggs: and, on joining him, sure enough, in a little sandy-floored cavern, some 25 feet down the face of the cliff, lay three eggs. I was so pleased that I did not wait to put myself in the sling, but threw the rope over and, with the Doctor and my coxswain Muckle holding on above seated with their feet against a rock, down I went, hand over hand, and was soon in the cavern. Two eggs were lying side by side, and a third some two or three feet away. There was absolutely no attempt at a nest, or even a hollow: the eggs lay on the bare dry sand. I soon had them in my handkerchief, and holding this in my mouth, made a bowline in the end of the two-inch manilla, and in a minute or two was at the top exulting.

After a few moments' gloating we proceeded with our search, and fifty yards further on my coxswain saw some more eggs, this time not more than 12 feet down the cliff. More cautious this time, I got into the canvas sling, of which Col. Willoughby Verner had given me the pattern, and was soon over the edge and in possession of the clutch of three, again curiously arranged, two of the eggs being together, the third being some two feet away. This clutch was handsomer than the other and more boldly blotched.

We now thought that we had done well, and seeing nothing more retired across the crevice with the intention of returning to the boat and going after Blue Rock-Pigeons, of which there were a good many on the island and yet more on the cliffy coast of the mainland. Taking one more look with the binoculars at the face of the cliff we had left, the Doctor declared he saw an egg; further looking revealed

the other two, separated as usual from the third, and this time behind two small stones on the floor of the cave. We were soon back, and this time Stenhouse went over, not twenty yards from the first nest; we soon had the eggs, which proved the lightest in colouring of the three clutches. Before going to the boat we blew them, and found all more or less incubated, some perhaps five days, some quite twice that time; but none were infertile, as we had expected the separated single eggs to be, and no one could doubt for an instant that the three in each case formed one clutch, the colouring being identical, though the separated specimen of the first clutch was rather the smallest.

The Falcons (very dark birds) seemed to pay little attention to us, and uttered no sound that I heard; they did not come within easy gun-shot, for which I was secretly rather glad, though I wanted a skin. We did not shoot at them: they looked like gigantic Swifts, with their sooty colour and long pointed wings.

We were soon on our way to the cliffs where the Blue Rock-Pigeons abound. All the best stances had been taken up; but we found a place, and I know that I fired thirty-seven shots for eight Pigeons, an Alpine Swift (spread of wing 20 inches), and a Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), which I shot by mistake, as it came fair from the sun: the Pigeons gave extraordinarily difficult shots. Occasionally an Eleonora passed along, looking no doubt for wounded birds, and a couple of Eagles were also hunting (I could not make out their species). Both Alpine and Common Swifts were hawking high overhead, and one Red-legged Partridge passed out of range, going very fast away from the Eagles: he was nobbled by a fine shot of Halsey's a few seconds later, and was a very large bird, weighing 24 oz.

The gloaming was on us, and it was pitch-dark before we got to the passage in the inner harbour. However, with the lights of the fleet to help, 9 o'clock saw us on board, after a delightful and sporting day.

I forgot to mention that on the island we found some old nests, apparently of Gulls, and in one cave on the face of the cliff was a large nest of sticks: I shall examine this,

if I am ever at the place again in April or May. Lots of Shearwaters (*Puffinus kuhli*) were sitting on the water or skimming over its surface, and we saw a small bird on the island which looked like one of the Wheatears; it apparently had young, by the persistent way it returned to some rocky debris.

The following are the measurements of the clutches of the eggs of *Falco eleonoræ*:—

1st clutch.	2nd clutch.	3rd clutch.
43 × 35 mm.	44 × 35 mm.	42 × 35 mm.
44 × 35 mm.	44 × 35 mm.	43 × 35 mm.
44 × 34 mm.	45 × 35 mm.	41 × 35 mm.

Yours &c.,

A. M. FARQUHAR, Capt. R.N.

SIRS,—During August of the present year I procured a male specimen of the large Indian Weaver-bird (*Ploceus megarhynchus* Hume) in the Calcutta bird-market. The dealer from whom I purchased it told me that he had bought it a few days previously at a fair at Gorakhpur, in the North-West Provinces. Mr. Hume's types now in the British Museum were obtained from Kaladoongi, near Naini Tal, North-West Provinces. The two specimens obtained by Mr. Finn for the Indian Museum, Calcutta, also came from Naini Tal. Gorakhpur is 300 miles south-east of Naini Tal, and 100 miles south of the Nepal territory.

I had no difficulty in recognising the specimen, from the excellent coloured plate in the January number of 'The Ibis'; also because I was already acquainted with the two birds obtained by Mr. Finn—one of which is now on deposit at the London Zoological Gardens, whilst the other is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The bird, when I first obtained it, was in brilliant summer plumage; it is now (November) rapidly assuming the more sombre winter garb. Since Mr. Finn's recent return to India from Europe I have referred the bird to him, and he agrees with my identification.

Yours &c.,

1 A Camac Street, Calcutta, India,
November 21st, 1901.

E. W. HARPER.

Additions to the American Museum of Natural History.—The report of the American Museum of Natural History for 1899 informs us that the "Department of Vertebrate Zoölogy" has received 1108 mammals, 3139 birds, about 1200 reptiles, and 23 fishes. About one hundred birds have been added to the Exhibition Collection, and also several new bird-groups, including the "Large Brown-Pelican" group. The "Local Collection of Birds," which includes examples of the species found within fifty miles of New York City, has been installed and forms one of the most instructive features of the department. Besides representatives of nearly all of the birds found in the immediate district, there are special cases devoted to the birds found there at particular seasons, the specimens being changed from month to month in order to show just what birds are present at any given season of the year. This arrangement proves very serviceable to local bird-students, who thus have only a few specimens to pass in review in their search for any particular species. Considerable material has been gathered for additional bird-groups, and several thousand skins have been received from South America which furnish many desirable specimens for mounting.

The Ruskin Plot.—In memory of his old friend John Ruskin, Mr. Henry Willett, of Arnold House, Brighton, has made an interesting and valuable gift to the Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire. It consists of a piece of ground, about five acres in extent—woodland, marsh, bog, and water,—which contains many local and rare specimens of animal and vegetable life. It is Mr. Willett's wish that the land should be known as "The Ruskin Plot," and that it should be kept for all time in its natural condition. In order to ensure this a Trust is being prepared, which will vest the plot in the following Trustees:—The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the Mayor of Oxford, the Vice-Chancellor, the Radcliffe Librarian, the Hope Professor of Zoology, the Sherardian Professor of Botany, and the donor.

Mr. Willett has done for Oxford what Mr. Rothschild has accomplished for Cambridge, in securing for the University a piece of Wicken Fen, the haunt of the Swallow-tail Butterfly. The Ruskin Plot is situate at Cothill, near Abingdon, Berks, and is not meant so much for collecting-purposes as for observation. It is hoped that a systematic record year by year of a piece of ground uninterfered with by cultivation will be in itself of considerable scientific interest. (Museum Journal, i. p. 139.)

The Protection of Birds in New Zealand.—In common with New Zealand ornithologists, we have often deplored the traffic in the rare birds of that country, threatening, as it does, the extirpation at no distant time of many of the unique forms. The Government of our progressive Colony has at length devised an expedient which, we hope, will put an effectual stop to this traffic. A measure has been passed by the local legislature, under the title of "The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901," for the ostensible object of prohibiting the exportation of ancient carvings and other works of Maori art; but the Act is made far-reaching, and its provisions are extended to all "objects of scientific value or of historical interest relating to New Zealand." There is a proviso exempting from its operation any "botanical or mineral collections or specimens," but not zoological. This gives the Government the power to put down with a firm hand the dealers' depredations, of which so much complaint has of late been heard. The new measure will give the very distinctive avifauna of New Zealand a chance of surviving; and this will be a matter of delight to all lovers of birds. The last captured specimen of *Notornis mantelli* could only be kept in the colony by the Government coming forward and purchasing it, for £250, for one of the local museums. This was in deference to strong public opinion on the subject. Under the present statute-law no such specimen could be sent away without the express written authority of the Colonial Secretary; and we may be sure that this would not be granted, except perhaps in favour of some public museum. We heartily congratulate our

Antipodean brethren on this new departure in the way of protective legislation.

Prof. Davenport's Caution to Splitters!—"There is only one class of zoologists that I would wish to blot out, and that is the class whose reckless naming of new 'species' and 'varieties' serves only to extend our work and the tables of the conscientious synonym-hunter. Other than such all classes will contribute to the advancement of Science. No doubt there are unlabeled species, and no doubt they must, as things are, be named. And no doubt genera and families must be revised and some groups split up and others lumped. So welcome to the old-fashioned systematist, though his day be short, and may he treat established genera gently!"—Prof. C. P. DAVENPORT, in his Address to the Section of Zoology of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Denver, Col., U.S.A., 1901.

Further Abyssinian Exploration.—We have the pleasure of announcing that the well-known collector, Mr. Edward Degen, is going out to Abyssinia to join Col. Harrington at Adis Abeba, and that all his collections are to be sent to the British Museum. Mr. Degen will commence to collect zoological specimens to the north of Adis Abeba, and gradually work northwards to Lake Tana.

The Irruption of the Nutcracker in the Autumn of 1900.—An extract from the 'Schwalbe,' kindly sent to us by Victor Ritter von Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen, gives further particulars of the invasion of the Slender-billed or Siberian form of the Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) into North-eastern Europe in the autumn of 1900, which, although not to be compared with the great invasion of 1844, was spread over a large area. Particulars are given of many occurrences in Bohemia and Moravia, and of a few in Silesia, Upper and Lower Austria, Hungary, and Croatia. We know also that some of the flock reached Holland (see Bull. B. O. C. xi. p. 48), and one at least appears to have strayed as far as England,

not, however, arriving till January 1901 (see 'Ibis,' 1901, p. 737), and one to Denmark (see above, p. 163).

A wonderful new Bird of Paradise.—In the last number of the 'Ornithologische Monatsberichte' (Jahrg. ix. p. 185) Dr. Reichenow describes a new and wonderful Paradise-bird, a skin of which has been recently received at Berlin from Kaiser Wilhelm's-land (German New Guinea), where it is said to have been obtained in the neighbourhood of Friedrich-Wilhelm's Hafen. It appears to be probably a bastard between *Seleucides niger* and some species of true *Paradisea*—perhaps *P. minor finschi* or *P. augustæ-victoriæ*, nearly every feature of the novelty being met with in one or the other of these two forms. Dr. Reichenow proposes for this bird the name of *Paradisea mirabilis*, if it should turn out *not* to be a hybrid; and adds that if such shall be found to be not the case, it would probably be necessary to give it a new generic name. A figure of this bird will be given in the 'Journal für Ornithologie.'

The Pretoria Museum and Zoological Garden.—We are informed that Mr. Lewis T. Griffin, now Taxidermist at the South African Museum, Capetown, after six years' service in that Institution, has accepted an appointment as Chief Taxidermist to the Pretoria Museum and Chief Overseer of the Zoological Garden attached thereto. The Director of both these Institutions is Dr. J. W. B. Gunning, F.Z.S.

XI.—Obituary.

MR. JOHN YOUNG, MR. H. M. COURAGE, the Rev. H. A. MACPHERSON, MR. W. DOHERTY, and Cav. L. M. D'ALBERTIS.

MR. JOHN YOUNG, who died on the 25th of May last, was the second son of the late Rev. Edward Newton Young, Rector of Quainton, Bucks, and was born in June 1838. Being originally intended for the Navy, he was educated at Dr. Burney's noted Naval College at Gosport, but a slight deafness altered his destination, and, after a voyage to India